

A

REVIEW

OF THE

STATE

OF THE

BRITISH NATION.

 Saturday, March 12. 1709.

IN Discourſing upon the *African* Company Affair now depending, I have endeavour'd as far as poſſible to keep my Reader to the Queſtion in Debate, I mean the Neceſſity of preſerving the Trade, and the proper Means for doing it. I have induſtriouſly avoided ſiding with Parties, defending or charging one ſide or other. It is not one Farthing Matter, as the Queſtion now ſtands, who has traded moſt or leaſt, who has been honeſt and who not; I might be allow'd to ſay, neither Side has much to ſay for themſelves, and perhaps injure no Body.

But I confeſs, to me it ſeems ſtrange, that all the Time hitherto ſpent in arguing this Caſe, has not brought us one Step nearer the true State of the Affair, than we were the firſt Day; the Company and the ſepa-

rate Traders have appear'd againſt one another, the Evidence have confronted one another, told a great many . . . and ſome Truth; ſhown a great deal of Rapacity, and but little Manners. — Servants have been brought to fly in the Faces of their Maſters, betray Secrets, lay open their Emphatic Letters, ſay ſome even to betray private Converſation; any Thing in the World to gratifie Revenge, and according to the laudable Practice of True-Born-Engliſhmen, to ſtand in the Faces of thoſe that gave them their Bread.

I ſpeak it without any Concern in the Thing; Gentlemen, take it among you, and whoever ſits the Cap, take the Cap. — But it is an abhor'd Cuſtom, and too much a Peculiar to the *Engliſh* Nation, to fly in the

the Face of their Benefactors, and having under the strictest Ties of a Friend or a Servant, entred into the Secrets either of Business or of Confidence——Whenever that feign'd Friendship, for it can be no better, dies, or the Employ ceases, I will fly in the Face of my Friend, or insult my Master, betray all his Trusts, reveal every Confidence, and if possible ruin my Benefactor——If I am employ'd by the *African* Company, if I am sent over a poor Fellow next to starving, if I am rais'd by them to the highest Trust, if I eat their Bread 10, 12, or 20 Years, and from nothing can raise my self to ten thousand Pounds under them——As soon as ever they presume to dismiss me, I am their mortal Enemy for ever, I'll abuse them, expose them, and betray every Thing I know of them: WILL I? No, Gentlemen, *not I the Author of this Paper*, I thank GOD I can boast, that I dare go thro' the worst of Fates, and condemn that vile Degeneracy of Spirit at the Price of all my Fortunes, nor can Favour, Fear, Promises, or Threatning move any honest Man to it. But I, *True-Born-Englishman*, will do all this, and I cannot help saying from my own sad Experience, that Generosity and Friendship in this Age are come to this——That if you carry an *English* Man twenty Mille upon your Back, and let him down HARD, he'll curse you to your Face.

This is a Digression, tho' I think my Observation very just; but to come to our Evidence, Railing and Scolding, Scandal and Reproach are the Substance, I confess, of all I have heard, and not two Words yet said to the Question; here was you Knave, and you Knave; 1. *You Knaves Company*, for you make a Neutrality with *France* for the Trade——As if the Merchants were bound to fight, because Princes do. Indeed, Gentlemen, I think it would be an honest Method, if all Trade observ'd a Neutrality; let the Princes of the World quarrel and fight, their Quarrels may be just; but what has the innocent Merchant to do with it? Why should Trade be interrupted? I cannot, I confess, see so much as some do the Equity of Privateering, Letters of Marque, &c. that because *A* has robb'd me in *America*, therefore I'll rob *B* in *Africa*, that

never wrong'd me——But after all, this Neutrality could not be prov'd neither. 2. There's you Knave Company, for you took away Captain . . . Ship from him. Then there was you Knave Interlopers, for your Captain gets drunk, and give away your Ship to a *Negro* King, and we took it back again, and lent you Sails, Anchors, Cables, &c. put the Brute out, put his Mate in, and sent you home your Ship, and you ungrateful Knaves, would not pay us for our Sails and Rigging, but charge us with Robbery——So I knew a True-Born-*English* Man prosecute an honest Man for House-breaking, because he pull'd the Tiles off and got in, when his House was on Fire, and sav'd it from Burning.

Well, then there's you Knave Company, one of your Agents committed a barbarous Murther, for he pistol'd one of the Kings of the Country——Then there's you Knave Interlopers, for you have entertain'd the Murtherer, and employ him, and he is now in your Service, and able to help you accuse the Company for the Blood he shed; whereas the Company say, they are very well content, that he and all the rest of their Deserters, whom your harbour, should be hang'd as they deserve.

Then there's you Knave Company, for you are going to plant Indico, Pepper, Cotton and Sugar on the Continent of *Africa*, to the Ruin of our Colonies, and the Destruction of our Trade.

And there's you Knave Interlopers, for you sent Presents of great Guns and Ammunition to the *Negro* Kings, by which in Time you may qualifie them all to put an End to this Dispute, and drive you all away from the Country, for what you really are all by Profession, viz: A Parcel of Kidnappers.

Then again, there's you Knave Interlopers, for you come upon the Coast, invite the poor *Blacks* on board to trade with you, and then like Pirates, hoist your Sails, and carry them all away into Captivity; and the Natives in Revenge murder the Company's Servants, and all the *English* they can find. And what is the Up-shot of all this Clamour now——But a clear Demonstration, that this Contention on both

Sides

Sides will destroy the Trade, and that, it must be settled one way or other.

Now to come to the Point, A COMPANY is the Word.—And I cannot but wonder, the Gentlemen, who appear against the Company, have not yet said one Word to prove, That a regulated Company, as the *Turkey Company, &c.* where the particular Members are not oblig'd to trade, can give any National Assurance that they will preserve the Trade.

They can trade, THEY CAN secure the Castles and maintain them, as they say. But, Gentlemen, how shall the Nation know YOU WILL? To say your own Interest will oblige you, is to say nothing; for Men do not always pursue their own Interest, and that Interest may alter; for if War, if Casualty, if Losses, if Charge in maintaining, &c. on the Coast, which you now call a Trifle, but when you come to employ Agents to do it, may find it otherwise. If I say, any of these Accidents turn the Scale of your Interest against Trading, tell us who is the Man—

Who is the Man that will trade when he gets nothing by it, that will fit out a Ship merely to preserve the Factory or Settlements, that tho' he knows he shall lose, will employ his Stock?—Let the *House of Commons* see the Men that will do this.—And if not, whenever the Traders by any Discouragements slack their Hands, the Charge rises the higher upon those that remain, and they drop it of Course.—Where then are your Ports and Factories, and where the Trade?

And pray, Gentlemen, *separate Traders*, will you tell us who will be your Factors and Agents there upon such Terms? Will they be Men that may be trusted? Will honest Men go over, and burn, and fry there for you for 100 l. a Year.—And will Knaves do you any Service? They will only get Money by you, and come home and accuse you.—And in a few Years we shall have you before the House too, as the Company are now, with your own Servants insulting you.—Such People as these will not keep your Forts out of the Hands of the *Dutch*, that gape for the Prey, and acknowledge by their Bagerness to supplant you, that the Castles and Forts of the Company are of more Value than you speak of.

Again, pray, *Gentlemen separate Traders*, will you upon this precarious uncertain Fund be able to withstand and counteract the *Dutch* and *French*, who have an united Strength and Stock?—The *Dutch* will not take your Forts themselves, but they will put the Natives upon you, and assist them privately. How often have they attempted it already, that you should make a Question of it? Did they not come down with 3 Ships, and 1400 Men, black and white, and raise a whole Province upon you, only to prevent your getting *Oyster-shells*; and why? Only because they knew, that *Oyster-shell War*, if they prevail'd, would prevent your having any Lime which is made of those Shells, to repair your Forts.

It is apparent, the *Dutch* have nothing nearer their Hearts upon this Affair, than if possible to beat off the *English* from that Coast, and they would soon show us the Difference of the Trade, if once they had Possession of the Coast.

But now comes a mighty Noise upon the Company, for encouraging the planting Indico, Pepper, Cotton, &c. upon the Continent of *Africa*, and this is improv'd as a mighty Thing to be complain'd of.—They would have talk'd of planting Sugar Canes too, but the Governor's Instructions unhappily had not that Word in them, which was a Disappointment to some People.

But must this Nation be for ever blind to their Trading Interest? Does calling five Men Judges of Trade entitle them to understand no more of Trade than this? And must all Trade go to such a dumb Oracle as that?—Were I to peruse all the mighty Volumes, which the Men call'd *Com . . . s* of Trade have wrote, and could the long Journals of the Improvements of Trade, they have made by their wondrous Skill, appear, I doubt not, but the contrary to this would be prov'd sufficiently.

Some of the *separate Traders*, who appear against this, and cry out of ruining the Colonies, have formerly appear'd against the *East-India Company*, and perhaps with much more Reason.—But pray, Gentlemen, let me ask a few Questions of you, about planting Indico, Cotton, and Pepper in *Africa*; as for Sugar it is ridiculous, and shall be answer'd by it self.

Can all our Colonies Supply us with Indigo for our Business? Do we not fetch vast Quantities every Year from the East Indies, and pay our Billions for it? — And does not the Dearness of it render the Dying of our Manufactures dear, by which our Neighbours out-do us, and will not buy our Cloth dyed, but dye it themselves, because they can do it cheaper?

I do affirm, if the African Company, or any Company could plant and make in Africa a thousand Tun of Indigo a Year, and bring it hither, it would be so much clear to this Nation, and not only save us the Money at home which is now paid for it, but be assistant to our Manufactures, in reducing the Price, and the Colonies not be injur'd.

I am ashamed to see, Men that pretend to espouse the Trade of England, and to understand it also, argue so against our known Interest; I do farther say, that could all the Cotton, Pepper, Indigo, Salt-peter, or any other Commodities we now bring from the East Indies be produced in Africa, while we send out Money for the first, and Manufactures or Baubles for the last, it would soon show us, that 'tis our Interest, and that the African Trade is in its Degree the most profitable Trade in this Nation; and the Reason is plain, viz. That our Colonies cannot supply us with Indigo and Cotton; if they can, why do you not prohibit them from Spain and the Indies? Again, I say, this is the most unanswerable Argument for establishing an African Company, for that they may be able to make these Improvements, which the open Trade cannot; of which by itself.

I shall speak more largely to this hereafter, but for the present I advance this, and will defend it at the Bar of the House of Commons, if call'd to it, That it is the undoubted Advantage of this Nation to plant, raise, or produce any Commodity, that now grows in our own Colonies, while our said Colonies are not able to produce the Quantity we want, and that we are oblig'd to buy it in other Countries for our ready Money. — And this shall for ever be

true, my Vote, Determination, Opinion, or Allegation of all the wise Commissioners of Trade in the World, to the contrary in any wise notwithstanding.

ADVERTISEMENT.

Just publish'd;

THE SCOT'S NARRATIVE Examined, with a Vindication of the Magistrates of Edinburgh in particular, and the Government of Britain in general, in their Proceedings against the Episcopal Dissenters in Scotland. (Price 6d.)

An Advertisement of CHARITY.

BY SIR WILLIAM READ Her Majesty's Oculist, Who has by the Blessing of GOD, on his long Experience with good Success, cur'd great Numbers of People of Cancers, Ulcers, Fistulas, Wens, Double and Single, Hair Lips, Wry Necks, and other Deformities, with Deafness, tho' of long Continuance, but especially of Blindness, Dimness of Sight, Cataracts, and all Distempers of the Eyes, and even many that have been born Blind.

He shall continue in Town at his House in Durham Yard in the Strand, where all the Afflicted in the aforesaid Cases may apply to him.

He continues to give his Advice and Assistance to the Poor, especially to such Seamen and Soldiers as have receiv'd any Injury to their Sight in the Service of their Country, whom he has always assisted, ever since the Beginning of King William's Reign, to whom he was also sworn Oculist; He has cur'd great Numbers of them in mere Charity, who must otherwise have been useless to themselves, and chargeable to the Government, and resolves still to continue his Charity to them as freely as ever. Such as send to his House may also have at reasonable Rates his restorative Medicines for the Eyes, which prevent Suppurations of Cataracts in their Beginnings, and clean and preserve the Sight.

Also the Lady READ has by long Experience and very successful Practice arriv'd to an extraordinary Skill in Couching Cataracts, which she performs with great Dexterity and Success.